

KDHE Celebrates Environmental Achievements During Earth Day

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), Kansas Historical Society (KHS), and the Shawnee County Conservation District (SCCD) joined together at the History and Environmental Fair at the Kansas History Museum in Topeka on Earth Day, April 22, to recognize the environmental accomplishments of Kansans and to celebrate the progress made.

Thousands of students from across the state attend this annual fair designed to promote environmental awareness and Kansas history. On the anniversary of the Lewis and Clark expedition traveling through Kansas, students had the opportunity to learn about the beginnings of environmental improvement efforts and today's ongoing efforts to keep the environment clean for future generations.



KDHE Secretary Roderick Bremby briefs students and media on the 3R's on Earth Day.

Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary of KDHE, highlighted the agency's efforts to "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle" waste across the state, in addition to keeping air and water clean and healthy for all Kansans.

"Kansans have many opportunities to make every day Earth Day by recycling, composting and properly disposing of household hazardous wastes, and by taking care of our air and water," Bremby said.

Bremby pointed to several areas of success regarding solid waste disposal, and air and water quality improvements in Kansas:

- More than 500 tons of material is expected to be recycled this year in Kansas' 1,600 plus recycling centers, including a new one opening this weekend in Pittsburg.
- More than 155,000 tons of compost were produced last year from material that would otherwise have gone to landfills.
- In the past year, 3.5 million pounds of household hazardous waste material was collected and more than 500,000 pounds of it was reused.
- EPA recently notified Kansas that it met all six ambient air quality standards.
- A recent report submitted to EPA shows 92 percent of the state's streams were fully or partially supportive of their designated uses (such as swimming, fishing, and boating).

- More people than ever are now served by public water supplies. The 1,086 public water supplies in Kansas serve 2.5 million Kansans.
- Kansas, with the assistance of EPA and local municipalities, has established revolving loan funds that help finance water and sewer improvements. Over 300 loans have been made to municipalities totaling approximately \$800 million.



To assist with spreading the message of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle, KDHE displayed its new mobile education trailer that will travel throughout the state to inform children as well as adults about these important environmental issues.

Jim Rudeen (white shirt) and Bill Bider, KDHE Bureau of Waste Management, work with Earth Day students on the importance of identifying Household Hazardous Waste.

Also, the Bureau of Air and Radiation shared its mission and displayed information about air quality and radiation protection in Kansas to Earth Day participants at the Museum.

Air and Radiation staff presented interactive games and demonstrated real radiation equipment to students. The booth displays and presentations, staffed by more than 15 bureau volunteers, showed young people how they can help *Keep Kansas Air Clean*.



Air and Radiation Staff demonstrate the importance of protecting Kansas air to students and Secretary Bremby.

During the fair, Mary Madden, assistant director of education and outreach with the Kansas State Historical Society, discussed current environmental awareness efforts in conjunction with the anniversary of the Lewis and Clark expedition; and Wayne Lukert, Shawnee County Conservation District Board member discussed the history of the fair. More than 15 environmental exhibitors were on hand including Kansas Agri-women, Topeka/Shawnee County Parks and Recreation, and Keep America Beautiful.